



## THC-Psychosis and Violence

The following is a list of violent incidents in which cannabis use or cannabis-induced psychosis played a role in the criminal charges and sentences. The attacks took place in several different countries, and the attackers were of varied races and ethnicities. Several perpetrators regained lucidity after stopping cannabis use. The sentences vary wildly from no jail time to 50 years in prison, but none were convicted of first-degree murder.

The incidents have several similarities:

- Most had a sudden onset of violent behavior.
- Knives or other sharp objects were used as the weapon.
- The perpetrator had no motive.
- Violence incidents were against family or friends with whom the perpetrator had no animosity.
- Violent acts were brutal.
- The perpetrator did not plan or try to conceal the crime.
- The perpetrator did not seem to feel pain when police used physical force to stop the assault.
- The age of the perpetrators was mainly in their twenties or early thirties, with some older.
- Gender was overwhelmingly male.

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2024—Rockford, Illinois—[Christian Soto](#), 22, is facing 4 counts of first-degree murder after he stabbed and killed 4 people after using marijuana supplied by his friend whom he killed. He claims the marijuana was laced, and he became psychotic and grabbed a knife from the kitchen. (Ongoing).

2024 – Dublin - [Diego Costa Silva](#) was found not guilty by reason of insanity due to cannabis-induced psychosis when he killed and decapitated his wife. Both psychiatrists agreed that the psychosis was not due to acute intoxication of the drug but a more persistent illness of cannabis-induced psychosis, with the court hearing that the accused persisted in displaying psychotic symptoms eleven days after he was arrested and detained. Silva believed his wife was a serpent, and he had to cut off her head after strangling and stabbing her to make sure she was dead.

2024 - California – [Bryn Spejcher](#) killed O'Melia in Thousand Oaks, California, when she was 28. The charge was reduced from 2nd-degree murder when the prosecution expert

determined she had an episode of cannabis-induced psychosis after being given cannabis in a bong by O'Melia. She stabbed O'Melia 108 times and then stabbed herself. Police tased her and used their baton 9 times before she dropped the knife.

2023 -Pennsylvania – Babysitter [Lavrius Watson](#), 28, was sentenced to 15-40 years after pleading guilty to 3rd-degree murder. He stabbed and killed a 41-year-old mom of kids he was babysitting with a kitchen knife after they shared marijuana cookies, and he had an adverse reaction. (Watson is black.)

2021- Iowa - [Paul Belk](#), 32, was sentenced to 50 years in prison for stabbing his mother 16 times with a knife and scissors in 2020. He must serve 35 years before being eligible for parole. The defense said he was insane at the time; the judge said his marijuana use kept him from forming intent, so the judge convicted him of 2nd degree instead of first-degree murder. (Belk is black.)

2021 - UK [Jacob Notman](#), 28, pled guilty to manslaughter for stabbing his girlfriend 30 times after eating a marijuana brownie. He was cleared of murder due to lack of intent after the crown heard evidence that he was having a psychotic break due to the “bad cannabis trip.” The phone video recorded the horrific attack. The judge said cannabis can be very dangerous. “It is an illegal drug for good reason.”

2021—France—[Kobili Traore](#), France’s highest court, ruled that Traore would not have to stand trial for the 2017 killing of a Jewish woman by throwing her over a balcony. Traore was a heavy cannabis smoker who was found to have been “delirious” at the time and, therefore, not responsible. He had been in psychiatric care since the event. The ruling drew widespread protests.

2021—Seattle—[Buckey Wolfe](#), 26, was charged with 2nd-degree murder for killing his brother with a 4-foot-long sword in 2018; Wolfe was under the delusion that his brother was a lizard. His social media posts, which were taken down, show psychotic posts and cannabis use. Some family members said Buckey should “smoke more pot to calm himself down.”

2020- Edmonton, Canada – [Jason Dickout](#) pled guilty to manslaughter after being charged with 2nd-degree murder and was sentenced to 3 years 9 months for stabbing and killing his mother in 2017 when he was 30. He had used marijuana with his sister, and the court determined he had an episode of extreme but “transient cannabis-induced psychosis.” And the court concluded that without cannabis, the incident would not have occurred. He was also sentenced to treatment and 3 years probation.

2020—Japan - [Satoshi Uematsu](#), 29, was found guilty of 2016 stabbing and killing 19 people and injuring 26 in a care facility where he had worked and sentenced to death. His defense had been planning to argue that he had been suffering from cannabis-induced psychosis at the time (which had been previously diagnosed.) He was found competent to stand trial. As of 2022, he was appealing his sentence.

2019 – British Columbia – [Adam Kehl](#), 30, pled guilty to manslaughter and was sentenced to 5 years less time served for stabbing and beheading his father in 2018. He was judged to have been suffering from “cannabis-induced psychosis.” A heavy cannabis user became psychotic after using during a gathering of 14 people. He was heard howling like a wolf and was seen stabbing at his father’s body. He seemed oblivious when police shot him with rubber bullets. He had no psychotic episodes since the attack. “Adam said he was unaware cannabis could lead to such a thing and, had he known, he would never have started.”

2018—Ontario, Canada—[Mark Phillips](#), 36, a lawyer, pled guilty to one count of assault reduced from aggravated assault when he attacked an immigrant family with a baseball bat in 2017. He was given no jail time. He claimed to be suffering from cannabis-induced psychosis. He had smoked several joints on the day of the attack. After stopping the use of cannabis in jail, he became clear-headed.

2017—Colorado—[Richard Kirk](#), 50, pled guilty to 2nd-degree murder for killing his wife in 2014 with a gun after eating a marijuana edible and was sentenced to 30 years. Kirk had initially pled not guilty by reason of insanity but changed his plea to avoid a trial for 1st-degree murder and life in prison. The defense had been planning to say he was suffering from psychosis after eating the marijuana; only THC was found in his system.

2015 – Melbourne, Australia – [Easton Woodhead](#), 20, was found not guilty of murder for the stabbing death of a homeless man due to “mental impairment.” He had been smoking cannabis daily and believed he was the son of a werewolf. The defense asserted he was suffering acute psychosis and pointed out he turned the knife on himself at some point.

2007 - Thousand Oaks, California – [Calvin Sharp](#) was sentenced to life without parole for stabbing a 6-year-old boy to death with a meat cleaver and injuring two others. The defense argued he was a paranoid schizophrenic, but the prosecution said he was in a marijuana-induced and “fluctuating” psychosis. The judge did not accept that Sharp was insane at the time of the crime. (Sharp is black.)

1983—British Columbia—[Bruce Blackman](#), 22, was found incompetent to stand trial after being accused of first-degree murder for the killing of 6 family members. Blackman was a heavy user of cannabis and used cannabis prior to the murders. He had been experiencing psychotic symptoms for some weeks and paranoid delusions.

